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OCI No. 1425/63

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
24 April 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Counterinsurgency in Iran*

1. The government's efforts to subdue rebellious tribesmen in southwestern Iran, which appeared to be succeeding in early April, received a severe setback on 21 April with the loss of two infantry companies in a tribal ambush. In addition to the approximately 100 casualties in this engagement, an additional twenty or so troops were killed in other clashes. It is likely that the rapidly mounting casualty figures and the knowledge that the tribesmen have acquired many more weapons will adversely affect the morale of the poorly trained troops engaged in antitribal operations.

2. These operations have required the commitment of nearly all the military forces available in the threatened area. The reserve now consists of only two paratroop companies. Attrition of equipment will also reduce the government force's effectiveness. Air strikes in support of ground-force operations do not appear to have accomplished much, because of difficulties of target identification and lack of ground-control facilities.

3. In spite of the success of the 21 April ambush, the tribal attacks still do not seem to have taken on the character of an organized uprising. The majority of the local population, both sedentary and seminomadic, either supports the government or is passive. Much of the small-scale banditry which has plagued the area since the beginning of the fighting in early March can be attributed to the desperate condition of the tribes at the end of a hard winter rather than to any organized rebellion. Nevertheless, it appears likely that establishing control over the tribal areas in Fars and Khuzestan provinces will prove

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a longer and more difficult process than Tehran had expected. It may require the commitment of additional forces to the area and may take many months.

4. At the same time, resistance to the Shah's reform program appears to be rising among religious fanatics in such centers as Qom, Meshed, Shiraz, and Resht. Clergy, who are in alliance with disaffected landlords and the antiregime National Front in opposing the program, appear largely responsible for the rise in propaganda against the government. This raises the possibility of assassination attempts against government officials, and particularly against the Shah.

*This memorandum covers information received since
USIB approval of SNIE 34-63 of 10 April 1963.

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